

Notes from Cerulean Warbler Meeting Knoxville, TN June 2001

Group Discussion of Research Needs and Identifying Priorities

The group brainstormed research needs and then identified which of these needs are considered immediate priorities. We started by posting the research priorities as listed in the Status Assessment and then asked for ideas of other research needs. Following is the list that was generated.

Wintering Grounds

- survivorship
- relative abundance among habitats
- habitat distribution
- habitat change over time

Demography

- across the breeding range
- differences in sex and age habitat use (including post fledging period)
- how impacted by silviculture

Landscapes and Habitat

- area sensitivity
- importance of abiotic factors
- response to land management, including silvics, landscape context, stand history
- silvicultural prescriptions to create habitat
- describe historical breeding habitats
- develop biological component on FIA-type inventories & timber cruise surveys
- fragmentation effects
- importance of vegetation structure
- develop habitat models
- breeding ground habitat assessment

Surveying and Monitoring

- census techniques (road vs. off-road, etc.)
- breeding distr. (fill in gaps from CEWAP)
- summarize BBC data
- new surveying techniques

Others

- migration: habitat, pathways, important locations, surveying?
- social systems on both breeding and wintering grounds

We came to agreement on which of these items are of the most immediate importance. We started out with a vote – everyone could vote for three of the items on the list. The votes were tallied and the research ideas getting the most votes were discussed further. The voting results were:

- wintering ground habitat/distribution (10 votes)
- demography across the breeding range (7 votes)
- impacts of silviculture on demography (7 votes)
- response to land management (7 votes)
- differences in sex/age habitat use (4 votes)
- developing habitat models (4 votes)
- assessing habitat change on the wintering grounds (3 votes)
- importance of vegetation structure (3 votes)
- silvicultural activities to create habitat (3 votes)
- (- remaining items had either 1 or 2 votes)

Based on these results, we tried to synthesize the items receiving the most votes into succinct statements of what the group considered the top research priorities:

- 1) wintering distribution of Cerulean Warblers and habitat use on the wintering grounds
- 2) responses to silviculture and other land management, and how these effect demography
- 3) assess basic demography across the breeding range
- 4) develop an understanding of post-fledging habitat use and useful habitat models

Group Discussion of Conservation Actions/Strategies and Identifying Priorities

We again started by brainstorming and developing a list of ideas:

Surveys and Monitoring

- surveys and monitoring of breeding, wintering, and migrating populations
- expanding Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project to do better at covering private lands

Management Recommendations and Setting Objectives

- develop management recommendations including habitat prescriptions
- produce a synthesis of current knowledge about Ceruleans, including unpublished or gray literature and personal experiences, especially relating to land management
- identify priority physiographic areas for Cerulean conservation and establish priority sites within physiographic areas
- develop management/conservation strategies for priority sites (management plans, conservation easements, land acquisition)
- establish Cerulean population and habitat objectives across its range
- promote Farm Bill activities that could benefit Ceruleans (WRP, CRP, etc.)
- promote riparian reforestation where appropriate
- evaluate land management actions

Information and Education

- develop fact sheets for general public education
- develop fact sheets on management recommendations for land manager
- develop workshops for land managers
- develop a more formal information exchange among researchers and managers (e.g., technical working group)
- inform land-use planners how they can help conservation efforts

Policy and Administrative Actions

- incorporate Cerulean Warbler needs into government agency planning processes, such as Forest Service, joint ventures, and state conservation plans
- incorporate Cerulean Warbler needs into NGO/private organization planning processes, such as Important Bird Areas and TNC ecoregional plans
- enact the Executive Order regarding protection of migratory birds
- establish stake-holder advisory group for Cerulean Warblers
- add Cerulean Warbler to federal and state endangered species lists

Collaborations

- develop collaborative partnership conservation actions
- solicit peer review of the outputs from this meeting, including the research and conservation priority lists, synthesis of current knowledge, and management recommendations

Funding

- develop sources for funding the priority research and conservation actions

After this list was developed, the group fairly quickly came to agreement on which items were priorities. Priority actions were grouped into A, B, and C categories according to their perceived level of immediate importance or dependence on other actions being completed first:

“Group A” Actions (highest priority for immediate action):

- expanding Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project to do better at covering private lands
- produce a synthesis of current knowledge about Ceruleans, including unpublished or gray literature and personal experiences, especially relating to land management
- develop a more formal information exchange among researchers and managers (e.g., technical working group)
- develop sources for funding the priority research and conservation actions

“Group B” Actions (high priority - should be undertaken soon, pending completion of some Group A actions)

- establish Cerulean population and habitat objectives across its range
- develop management recommendations including habitat prescriptions

“Group C” Actions (priorities pending completion of some actions in Groups A & B)

- solicit peer review of the outputs from this meeting, including the research and conservation priority lists, synthesis of current knowledge, and management recommendations
- develop fact sheets and other outreach/educational materials